



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/632,491	07/31/2003	David A. Skidmore	190514-1020	4397
24504	7590	02/27/2006	EXAMINER	
THOMAS, KAYDEN, HORSTEMEYER & RISLEY, LLP 100 GALLERIA PARKWAY, NW STE 1750 ATLANTA, GA 30339-5948				DANIELS, MATTHEW J
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
		1732		

DATE MAILED: 02/27/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/632,491	SKIDMORE ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Matthew J. Daniels	1732

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 December 2005.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-5,7-20 and 22-24 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-5,7-20 and 22-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. In the reply filed 9 December 2005, Claims 6 and 21 were cancelled, and new Claim 24 was presented. Claims 1-5, 7-20, and 22-24 are believed to be pending.

Specification

2. The objection to the specification is withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claim rejections set forth previously are withdrawn in favor of the following rejections.

4. **Claims 1-5 and 23** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whissell (USPN 4802836) in view of Batlle (USPN 5358214). As to Claim 1, Whissell teaches the well known aspects of making masonry units, comprising:

- a) raising a pallet to a bottom surface of a mold (Figs. 5- 7)
- c) dispensing mix into the mold (Fig. 6)
- d) compressing the mix with a shoe (Figs. 6-7)
- e) responsive to the compressing, forming a masonry unit.

Whissell appears to be silent to:

b) inserting a filler plug into the side of the mold between a partition plate and a pallet

However, Batlle teaches inserting a filler plug into the side of the mold between a partition plate and a pallet (Figs. 1-5).

It would have been *prima facie* obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the method of Batlle into that of Whissell for the following reasons:

a) Batlle teaches that stripping of the part from a mold causes serious problems since the adherence thereof to the mold itself and to the strips causes stresses to be formed in precastings, causing deterioration thereof, which Batlle's method resolves

b) Batlle suggests use in precastings, and Whissell's concrete blocks are considered to be precastings.

As to Claim 2, Batlle teaches removing the filler plug (3:40-45). **As to Claim 3**, Whissell strips by lowering the pallet, a step which is conventional and common in the art (Figs. 5-7). **As to Claim 4**, because Batlle's bevel sits on the bottom of the mold, it is obviously a bottom bevel in a masonry unit. **As to Claim 5**, Batlle's bevel could fulfill the intended use of being a mortar buffer surface, and therefore fulfills the claim limitation. **As to Claim 23**, Whissell and Batlle appear to be silent to the particular shapes and sizes sought in this dependent claim. However, these limitations appear to be drawn to the particular shape of the article sought and to the shape of the apparatus that makes the desired article. However, it is the Examiner's position that when the process steps are known from the prior art, the limitations relating to *size* or *shape* of the *article* produced or the *apparatus* used to perform the process would not be

sufficient to patentably distinguish the claimed method. Additionally, Batlle appears to teach the claimed shape (Fig. 5).

5. **Claims 7, 8, and 9-20** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whissell (USPN 4802836) in view of Batlle (USPN 5358214), and further in view of LaCroix (USPN 6113379) and Stuckey (USPN 1872522). Whissell and Batlle teach the subject matter of Claim 1 under 35 USC 103(a) above. **As to Claim 7**, Whissell and Batlle teach the bevel between the front surface and bottom surface (See Batlle's figures), but appear to be silent to the side gussets, and therefore to the forming of an angle of inclination between a front surface, and the top and sides. However, LaCroix teaches that such side gussets are known as a desired article shape (Fig. 7, for instance), and Stuckey teaches a "shoe" having an angular surface which would create a bevel between a front surface and a top surface (Figs. 1-5, 8-10). It would have been *prima facie* obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the methods of LaCroix and Stuckey into that of Whissell and Batlle in order to provide easy cleavage planes and decorative beveled edges which would be pleasing to the eye. **As to Claim 8**, in the combined method, LaCroix teaches side gussets, and Stuckey also teaches side gussets, and in the combined method, Stuckey's "shoe" would provide an angular surface which compressed against the angular surface of the opposing side gussets. **As to Claims 9-20**, Whissell, Batlle, LaCroix, and Stuckey appear to be silent to the particular shapes and sizes sought in these dependent claims. However, these limitations appear to be drawn to the particular shape of the article sought and to the shape of the apparatus that makes the desired article. However, it is the Examiner's position that when the process steps are known from the

prior art, the limitations relating to *size* or *shape* of the *article* produced or the *apparatus* used to perform the process would not be sufficient to patentably distinguish the claimed method.

6. **Claims 9-20** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whissell (USPN 4802836) in view of Batlle (USPN 5358214), and further in view of LaCroix (USPN 6113379) and Stuckey (USPN 1872522), and further in view of Knipper (USPN 3509250), Rasmussen (USPN 2475435), and Wittke (USPN 2532049). Whissell, Batlle, LaCroix, and Stuckey teach the subject matter of Claim 8 above under 35 USC 103(a). As to **Claims 9-20**, in the alternative that the size or shape of the article or bevels must be given patentable weight, Knipper, Rasmussen, and Wittke teach and suggest to the ordinary artisan that the sizes and shapes of the bevels and shoe be modified. In particular, Knipper teaches a plug (Fig. 3, Items 56, 66) in which inserts having a desired configuration can be put into the mold, and members of different configurations can be cast merely by changing the inserts without changing the basic structure of the mold (1:50-72). Knipper additionally teaches that the molding method and apparatus are readily adjustable to the size of the desired molded members (2:5-10). Rasmussen additionally teaches channels having a dovetail shape, or concave (Fig. 4, Items 33 and 32, respectively). Wittke teaches "shoes" having angled surfaces (Figs. 2 and 4, Item 41). It would have been *prima facie* obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the methods of Knipper, Rasmussen, and Wittke into that of Whissell, Batlle, LaCroix, and Stuckey in order to provide adjustable size and configuration bevels, as well as aesthetically pleasing and structurally reinforcing channels, bevels, or recesses. In the combined

method, it would have been *prima facie* obvious to vary the various configurations, sizes, or angles to arrive at the claimed invention.

7. **Claim 22** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whissell (USPN 4802836) in view of Batlle (USPN 5358214), and further in view of Koyama (USPN 3662438). As to Claim 22, Whissell and Batlle appear to be silent to the simultaneous insertion. However, Batlle clearly suggests multiple elements, and Koyama inserts multiple elements to provide recesses simultaneously (Fig. 3 and elsewhere). It would have been *prima facie* obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the method of Koyama into that of Whissell and Batlle in order to provide automated and rapid actuation at a high pressure.

8. **Claim 23** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whissell (USPN 4802836) in view of Batlle (USPN 5358214), and further in view of Knipper (USPN 3509250), Rasmussen (USPN 2475435), and Wittke (USPN 2532049). Whissell and Batlle teach the subject matter of Claim 1 above under 35 USC 103(a). **As to Claim 23**, in the alternative that the size or shape of the article or bevels must be given patentable weight, Knipper, Rasmussen, and Wittke teach and suggest to the ordinary artisan that the sizes and shapes of the bevels and shoe be modified. In particular, Knipper teaches a plug (Fig. 3, items 56, 66) in which inserts having a desired configuration can be put into the mold, and members of different configurations can be cast merely by changing the inserts without changing the basic structure of the mold (1:50-72). Knipper additionally teaches that the molding method and apparatus are readily adjustable to the size of the desired molded members (2:5-10). Rasmussen additionally teaches

channels having a dovetail shape, or concave (Fig. 4, Items 33 and 32, respectively). Wittke teaches "shoes" having angled surfaces (Figs. 2 and 4, Item 41). It would have been *prima facie* obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the methods of Knipper, Rasmussen, and Wittke into that of Whissell, Batlle, LaCroix, and Stuckey in order to provide adjustable size and configuration bevels, as well as aesthetically pleasing and structurally reinforcing channels, bevels, or recesses. In the combined method, it would have been *prima facie* obvious to vary the various configurations, sizes, or angles to arrive at the claimed invention.

9. **Claim 24** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whissell (USPN 4802836) in view of Batlle (USPN 5358214), LaCroix (USPN 6113379) and Stuckey (USPN 1872522). **As to Claim 24**, Whissell teaches the well known aspects of making masonry units, comprising:

- a) raising a pallet to a bottom surface of a mold (Figs. 5- 7)
- c) dispensing mix into the mold (Fig. 6)
- d) compressing the mix with a shoe (Figs. 6-7)
- e) responsive to the compressing, forming a plurality of masonry units.

Whissell appears to be silent to:

- a) a mold having gussets connected to internal surfaces of the mold
- b) inserting a plurality of filler plugs substantially simultaneously into the side of the mold between a partition plate and a pallet
- c) the beveled edges

However, Batlle, LaCroix, and Stuckey teach the following aspects:

- a) LaCroix teaches internal gussets (Fig. 7)
- b) Batlle teaches inserting a filler plug into the side of the mold between a partition plate and a pallet (Figs. 1-5). Koyama teaches that it is known to do so substantially simultaneously (Fig. 3)
- c) Stuckey teaches that by using beveled molds and a beveled shoe, it is possible to achieve a beveled-edge surface joining a front surface to a top surface, a bottom surface, and side surfaces. (Figs. 1-10)

It would have been *prima facie* obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the methods of Batlle, LaCroix, Stuckey, and Koyama into that of Whissell for the following reasons:

- a) Batlle teaches that stripping of the part from a mold causes serious problems since the adherence thereof to the mold itself and to the strips causes stresses to be formed in precastings, causing deterioration thereof, which Batlle's method resolves
- b) the beveled edges of Stuckey and LaCroix would have been obviously desirable due their aesthetically pleasing appearance over sharp corners
- c) Koyama's method would produce the obvious benefits of rapid and automated actuation.

Response to Arguments

10. Applicant's arguments filed 9 December 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive or are moot in view of the new grounds of rejection. Applicant's arguments appear to be on the grounds that the raising and lowering is not taught, Batlle's articles would not require shoes, Knipper has nothing to do with masonry units.

Art Unit: 1732

11. These arguments are not persuasive because the relative movement was taught by Cross and/or Rasmussen. The Examiner submits that the particular direction in which a portion of the apparatus moves with respect to gravity (up or down) does not materially affect the process, and instead submits that the same relative movement between mold and pallet fulfills the claim limitation, as in the methods of Cross and/or Rasmussen. Additionally, it is unclear to the Examiner how this aspect of moving up or down materially affects the claimed process, which appears to be drawn to a method of forming masonry units. However, it is believed that this argument is moot in view of the new grounds of rejection. The Examiner submits that no Official Notice was taken in the action because the assertions were supported by the references cited in the rejection.

12. As to the method of Battelle, use of pressure to completely fill molds with concrete is common in the art, and is at least taught by the instant references. One of ordinary skill finds it obvious to do so in order to avoid voids in the bricks.

13. Knipper teaches the types of decorative bevels that are known and obvious in the art, and provides motivation to the ordinary artisan to vary this aspect of the process, including angle, shape, or size. The methods of Knipper and Whissell are believed to be within the same field of endeavor as being both directed to shaping methods for architectural units.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Matthew J. Daniels whose telephone number is (571) 272-2450. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 7:30 am - 5:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Colaianni can be reached on (571) 272-1196. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



MICHAEL P. COLAIANNI
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

MJD 2/12/06

